

Chapter One

Grace is Deliverance

Scripture: 2nd Kings 6:17-20

Key Verse “Open his eyes, Lord, so that he may see.”

In this story, Elisha’s servant was worried about all the soldiers that had been sent to kill the prophet. When the servant went outside early in the morning, he could see they were surrounded by a whole army of soldiers with horses and chariots. They were ready to kill the whole town of Dothan, if that is what it took to bring Elisha to the king of Aram.

Now this servant had been with Elisha for a while and I am sure he had seen some amazing things happen. The king wanted Elisha captured because every time the king’s army would make a move to sneak up on the nation of Israel’s army, they would be warned by God through Elisha. The servant had to have seen what God was doing. Just recently, he had witnessed an axe head float to the surface of a creek just so the guy who borrowed it could return it to the owner.

Here is a lesson: God was protecting Elisha from the big things that come up in life. I mean, he had an army that was described as “a strong force” that was pursuing him. God was also taking care of the simple things that we tend to think He would not even care about. Elisha knew He cared.

God is the same way in our life too. He cares about the simple things in our life as much as He does if the army was at the door. Sometimes we need to open our eyes to see what God is doing in our life. Record those things in our memory to be part of our testimony to others how God is at work in our life.

I was a twenty-one-year-old man that had just graduated from tech school and went to work at a factory about fifty miles from my hometown. I was pretty much the average guy my age; I drank a little, I smoked a little and I was always on the lookout for something fun to do. I had never been with a woman in the biblical way, and was pretty naive when it came to the real world. I landed a really good job as an electronic technician in a manufacturing facility, I bought the sharpest Jeep CJ5 in our area and, I was just beginning to enjoy my new-found freedom from home and school.

That is when the army of bad things began to surround my life. A girl I worked with was going through a divorce, and in order to make her soon-to-be ex-husband jealous, she wanted to date the guy with the best looking four-wheel drive vehicle in town. That was me. I know now that she was way more interested in my Jeep than me. This relationship was my first intimate encounter and I fell head over heels in love. “Young and dumb,” I would call it now. To make a real long story short, conflict developed between me and her ex-husband. She ended up, with child, not knowing for sure who was the father.

I had been out of church since my late teens, but I knew God from an earlier encounter. When I was thirteen years old my mom and dad divorced. A lady next door to us began to take me and my sister to a small Pentecostal church she was a member of that was close to our house. That is where I really was saved and really met God.

For a couple of years, our small group of youth would go to revivals to sing and worship with fellow believers all across the tri-state area where we lived. God’s Holy Spirit was really alive with that group of believers. I recall telling our pastor I felt like God was calling me to preach. That was at age fourteen. Hard to believe that by age twenty two, I had found myself in such a spot.

I did something then that I had not done, unless I was really scared, and that was to pray. I had no knowledge of what God wanted to do with my life. I can look back now through all the years and realize that He would have done so much more if I had just asked. Best I can remember I just said, "God, I know you are real and I need your help." I went to a church that next Sunday that I had never been to before, but I knew that is where I should start. I don't remember what denomination the church was or if I could even find it today. I went in not knowing anyone at all in the church. I am not sure if I was nervous about that beforehand; the important thing was I went in to meet God, and He was waiting there for me.

I have no idea of this pastor's name and I don't know how he prepared for his sermon that week. I do know that somehow God had written what that preacher said just for me. I cried when it came time for the invitation hymn. I met briefly with the pastor to set up a meeting the next week to discuss my situation. On my way back to my apartment, I stopped and purchased a Sunday paper from a local big city, like I did every Sunday. In the classified section of the paper that week was an employment ad for an electrician. I was not an electrician but a technician. I was more into the electronics part of the job than the wire up the switch part of the job and I had no experience at all as an electrician, but I applied anyway.

I had worked at the factory where this job was located for the one summer as just a "do whatever" type of guy; sweep, shovel, any type of dirty work the other union factory workers did not want to do. The plant manager's son and I were fishing buddies and he worked there that summer also. God was lining up this electrical job up for me three years before I needed it, and I had no idea. I wasn't even wanting to be an electrician I wanted to be a lawyer at that time. I filled out an application,

and even though I had no experience as an electrician, they offered me the job.

This may not sound like much to some people, but I knew God had done this just for me. You would have thought after seeing that happen, I would have just jumped at the opportunity to fellowship with a God who I had abandoned for all those years. But, I did not. Looking back now it would have hurt my feelings if I had done that for someone and then they just ignored me for a while. That is what I did to God. A new job back in my home town with my family, never giving God the thanks or the credit, He deserved, yet He still loved me.

That is just a part of what grace can do. I did not deserve to get a new job, I had sinned. I did not deserve to be relocated closer to my family, I had sinned. I did nothing on my own except to humble myself before He who is on the throne. We are all sinners and can be saved by God's grace. What you do after receiving this grace is unlimited if you will trust God with your life decisions.

Deliverance is just one part of God's grace. That is not all of what God has for you either. He will keep you from putting yourself into situations like I had found myself in, if you will heed the warning signs He places before you. You remember that sharp Jeep I told you about earlier. He tried to keep me from going back to see this woman the first night I went to her house. She lived on a gravel road up on top of a hill. When I left her house, I was so excited about my new found relationship with her that I must have gunned the engine a little too much and my sharp looking Jeep ran just enough off the road to put a big scratch on the side, marred forever. God was telling me, "Stay away from this girl." Have I mentioned I was young and dumb at the time? On that night, if I had been walking as close to God as I should have been, I would have never gone back to her house. Before God delivered me from that town,

I had my tires slashed, my Jeep's canvas top sliced, and my heart broken. I was blind to the signs He had given me.

Two weeks from the time I had asked God to deliver me from the situation that I was in, I was working in a job that I had no qualifications for, living back in the security of my mother's home. I never told Him thanks until now, "Thanks, God."

1. Have you ever been in a situation where you thought there was no hope?

Read Acts 12: 1-19

Write your answer here.

2. Do you realize this is part of your testimony? Yes or No.

3. Would you consider this a miracle in your life? Make some notes below about your story. Would you be willing to share your story? Who would you like to share your story with?